

Apparently BellSouth has filed a petition at the FCC, asking the FCC to stop regulating broadband service. This is a bad idea.

If this petition is granted, the large phone companies will no longer be subject to regulatory review of their broadband pricing to independent ISPs. As a result, my ISP would have to individually negotiate pricing and the ability to interconnect, which would undoubtedly raise its prices, and my cost (and the cost to all consumers) the long term.

The more serious threat is that it is even possible that the phone companies could, in the long run, refuse to provide the necessary connections for DSL service to small ISPs, and ISPs would be unable to sell DSL at all.

BellSouth's claim is that because their own affiliated ISP service (which is similar to SBC/Yahoo here in California) already controls a huge majority of the market, so squashing the rest of the competition isn't likely to impact the market much.

While BellSouth doesn't serve California, Verizon and Qwest have followed up and filed similar requests. No doubt SBC will follow suit. It's great that SBC partners with independent ISPs in providing DSL service to California consumers, but I am concerned that if SBC were not required to provide access to all ISPs, the independent ISPs that create the value and competition in this market could suffer badly.

In short, the innovative, independent companies which built the Internet itself should not be wiped away and replaced by the large telephone monopolies.